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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/49/610/Add.2)]

49/179. Human rights and extreme poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 2/ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2/ and other human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations,

Considering the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, 3/

Recalling its resolutions 44/148 of 15 December 1989, 44/212 of 22 December 1989 and 45/199 of 21 December 1990, and other relevant resolutions,

Bearing in mind Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1992/11 of 21 February 1992 4/ and 1993/13 of 26 February 1993, 5/ as well as

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1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 2 (E/1992/22), chap. II, sect. A.

5/ Ibid., 1993, Supplement No. 3 (E/1993/23), chap. II, sect. A.

1993/35 of 25 August 1993 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 6/

Bearing in mind also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/12 of 25 February 1994, 7/ in which the Commission drew the attention of the General Assembly to the contradiction between the existence of situations of extreme poverty and social exclusion, which must be overcome, and the duty to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights,

Recalling its resolution 47/134 of 18 December 1992, in which it reaffirmed that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constituted a violation of human dignity and stressed the need for a complete and in-depth study of extreme poverty, based on the experience and the thoughts of the poorest,

Recognizing that the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and, in some situations, might constitute a threat to the right to life,

Deeply concerned that extreme poverty continues to spread in all countries of the world, regardless of their economic, social and cultural situation, and seriously affects the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and groups, who are thus hindered in the exercise of their human rights and their fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing that the elimination of widespread poverty and the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights are interrelated goals,

Recognizing also the work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur, and taking into account his preliminary report on human rights and extreme poverty, 8/

Affirming the importance of the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Copenhagen in March 1995, which will address, among the core issues affecting all societies, the alleviation and reduction of poverty,

1. Reaffirms that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. Reaffirms also that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in their communities, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty;

3. Expresses its satisfaction that the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1994/12, invited the Special Rapporteur to continue to give special attention to the following aspects in preparing his reports:

6/ See E/CN.4/1994/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/45 and Corr.1, chap. II, sect. A.

7/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum (E/1994/24 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

8/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/16.

(a) The effects of extreme poverty on the enjoyment and exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of those affected by it;

(b) Efforts by the poorest themselves to exercise their rights and participate fully in the development of the society in which they live;

(c) Conditions in which the poorest can convey their experiences and ideas and become partners in the enjoyment of human rights;

(d) Means of promoting a better understanding of the experiences and ideas of the poorest and those committed to working alongside them;

4. Again calls upon States, the specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, to give the necessary attention to this problem;

5. Notes with appreciation the specific actions taken by the United Nations Children's Fund to mitigate the effects of extreme poverty on children and the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to give priority to the search for some means of alleviating poverty within the framework of the relevant resolutions, and urges them to continue in this work;

6. Decides to consider this question further at its fifty-first session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

94th plenary meeting
23 December 1994